

detailed information, which we released to the public 2 weeks ago. And the Republicans were in on all of our investigation. They were invited to question the witnesses, to be present, to even see our majority report in advance.

We wanted to make this bipartisan and fair, and we did. And what we found was the President's failed attempt to take over the Department of Justice—to force them to go to the States and say: Don't validate the 2020 election.

A few people stood up and showed courage at the Department of Justice and said they were prepared to resign before they bent to President Trump's pressure, and that was a fact.

That is what we are faced with now—this former President still marketing his lies across America about the outcome of the 2020 election, and we will not even take the time to discuss elections and voting. The Republicans will stop us with a filibuster.

Many politicians in many States continue to use the Big Lie of the stolen election to try to make it harder for citizens to vote in future elections.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 19 States passed 33 bills to make it harder for citizens to vote, so far this year.

Hundreds of similar bills have been proposed in 49 States. These laws and proposals are a dagger at the heart of America's democracy.

The Freedom to Vote Act, which we want to start the conversation on, just the conversation and debate on tomorrow, is America's democracy defense act.

I want to commend the bill's sponsors: Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR. I don't know anybody who has worked harder than she has as chair of the Senate Rules Committee; Senator MANCHIN, he has been involved in the compromise; Senators TIM KAINE, ANGUS KING, and Rev. RAPHAEL WARNOCK.

And particularly I want to acknowledge our majority leader, CHUCK SCHUMER, for his leadership in this effort. He has worked hard at it, trying to bring this matter before the American people and on the floor.

We have also been engaged in a similar process on an equally critical piece of legislation, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

I have been here long enough to remember a time when the Voting Rights Act came before the U.S. Senate and got 98 votes—virtually all the Democrats, all the Republicans voted for it. No controversy. They believed that this product of the 1960s civil rights debate was fair. It said that in certain States with a proven history of discrimination against minority voters, when they proposed changes in election laws, we would examine them, preclear them, as they say.

The Supreme Court tossed out that section, and we have tried to restore it. I think the Supreme Court was wrong and maybe even naive in believing that

voter discrimination could not take place in the future.

When there was a voter suppression law passed in North Carolina and it was taken to a Federal court, the court said, and I paraphrase: They worked with “surgical precision” to violate the voting rights of minority voters.

The Freedom to Vote Act is the first of two crucial steps to take what our friend and colleague John Lewis said is a “precious, almost sacred” right, and I hope we take similar action on the Voting Rights soon.

Like the Freedom to Vote Act, the Voting Rights Act extension that Ronald Reagan signed in 1982 was the result of a compromise. In signing it, President Reagan said the final bill “prove[d] that differences can be settled in good will and good faith.”

Wouldn't that be nice to have that happen on this empty floor of the Senate tomorrow? That is all we ask of our Senate colleagues. Don't use the filibuster, the weapon of Jim Crow, to abet the attacks we are seeing on Americans' voting rights.

Offer amendments if you like, but work with us in good will and good faith to protect the voting rights which so many have sacrificed for.

INFLATION

Mr. President, the Republican minority leader came to the floor a few minutes ago and once again spoke about inflation. And of course we are concerned about it, and we are watching it closely.

We are in an unusual place where we are recovering from a pandemic and the economy is getting back on its feet. And, yes, there are problems. We see supply chain problems addressed by President Biden just this week. We know things are stacked up trying to get into the United States.

That was possibly unavoidable in the midst of a pandemic, when customer demand cratered, and now it is recovering and our demand outstrips the supplies that are flowing into our country.

But I also want to remind the Republican leader from Kentucky that his opposition to extend the debt ceiling, unfortunately, is also a problem when it comes to inflation. If there is uncertainty as to whether this Nation will pay its just debts, obviously that will be reflected in the financial markets and higher interest rates. So the strategy of Senator MCCONNELL, when it comes to the debt ceiling, is pro-inflationary itself.

Also, he talks about the “socialist spending spree” of the reconciliation bill, Build Back Better. And he says in critical terms that the Democrats argue that the cost of this will be “zero dollars.” He says that what Democrats don't say is they have to impose massive tax hikes for this to happen.

Well, I might say to the Senator from Kentucky, we have been very open about what our tax policy would be to pay for Build Back Better.

That policy would say those making over \$400,000 a year in income would

have to pay higher taxes. Yes, we have said it. Those people would have to pay higher taxes. And corporations that are escaping their just tax liability would now have to pay their fair share, too. In those two instances, we are raising taxes, but the taxes don't touch the working people in this country or those in lower income categories.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, he says—these are his words—Democrats are waging a war on affordable energy. I want to just reflect on the words “affordable energy.” It is true that we have ample energy resources in most places in America, but to argue that they are affordable is to fail to take into account what the costs of climate change are in America and around the world.

It is not affordable for us to have so many greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuels that we are creating extreme weather events all across the world. And we have seen them here in the United States. We have seen the fires in your State of California and in the Northwest; we have seen the flooding all across the country, including the Midwest; we have seen violent weather occurring at times of the year when historically it never occurs; and we are paying a heavy price for climate change, global warming, and the fact that we are so dependent on fossil fuels.

So when the Democrats—it used to be another bipartisan issue—and it no longer is—but when the Democrats sound the alarm about climate change and global warming, it is because current energy sources are not affordable in terms of the future of our planet. We have to find a better way.

I am sorry to see so many current politicians unable or unwilling to accept their responsibility to change this country and the world for the better and to leave an Earth, a planet, an environment that our kids can live in. I don't think that is too much to ask, and I think we ought to do our part.

IRS

Mr. President, the last thing Senator MCCONNELL went into this morning was giving new powers to the IRS to snoop.

Well, I guess that is true in some respects. We believe that people who owe taxes ought to pay them, and the vast majority of American families are honest; they want to do their civic duty. They file their taxes on time and try to pay every penny they are supposed to—not more, but every penny they are supposed to.

And yet there are many hiding their assets, hiding their profits, hiding their revenues, and hiding their money from the IRS. They should be held accountable.

Why should the average American family be held to a higher standard of honesty than the richest people in this country? I think it is only fair that everyone be held to the same standard.

SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. President, finally, I want to say this about a memorandum by the Attorney General, Merrick Garland, that Senator MCCONNELL referred to earlier. He suggested that we are going after parents, that we want to somehow harass, intimidate, and arrest parents who are appearing before school boards.

I went back to read this memorandum. It is very explicit.

Those who engage in violent conduct at school board meetings are going to be stopped. They are violating the law, and they are violating the spirit of those meetings where communities come together and decide the fate and future of public education.

I think the Attorney General is right, we should have safety in that environment, just as we demand it here on the floor of the U.S. Senate—nothing more and nothing less.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

INFLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as I begin this morning, let me just start by reacting to a couple of things that have been said here on the floor this morning already by my Democrat colleagues.

You know, the leader, Republican leader, when he was down here earlier, talked about the impact of inflation on the economy, and I have to tell you, that is very real. The inflationary impact is being felt all across this country. Energy costs are up, gasoline costs are up by huge amounts. Food costs are up in this country. Housing costs are up.

There isn't hardly any area of our economy where people aren't being impacted by inflation, meaning that the dollars that they earn are stretching less all the time. That is not a fake thing; it is not a temporary thing; it is a real thing. People are experiencing it in their economic lives on a daily basis, and to hear the Democratic leader say, well, you know, all the spending they are going to do is not going to cost anything, that it is going to be covered by tax increases and those tax increases are just going to hit people in the higher income categories, also is something that just isn't accurate.

Now let me just for a minute suggest something that I think is sort of fundamental when it comes to economics, and that is, when you have too many dollars chasing too few goods, you get inflation. The demand for a product goes up, and when the demand goes up, the price usually follows along with it.

Well, we have right now a lot of government dollars that have been swirling around the economy for some time, which is why I think in many respects we are seeing this inflation—the highest inflation that we have seen literally in 30 years in this country, affecting, as I said earlier, kind of all sectors of the economy and things that people have to purchase in their daily lives.

If you put more dollars out there, which is what is being talked about by our Democratic colleagues—another \$3.5 trillion that would flood the economy—I think the expectation is a very real one that you are going to see that inflationary pressure accelerate, intensify, because when you have that much money, that many dollars chasing too few goods, inflation is an inevitable result. The idea that we need to spend another \$3.5 trillion and that somehow that is going to be a solution right now also is not consistent at all with the facts and the data.

We saw here just recently the Congressional Budget Office come out with a report that suggested that government revenues are at the highest level—biggest increase, I should say, year over year since 1977. We are now over \$4 trillion this last year in revenues—\$4 trillion. It has never happened before in this country. It is the biggest 1-year increase in revenues since 1977, paid for largely by corporate tax receipts, which were up 75 percent year over year, and also by individual income tax receipts, much of which was coming from high-income earners. A lot of that increase that we have seen in income tax receipts in this country in government revenues comes from those people who are high-income earners.

All that to say, if you have that much revenue coming in to the government in this country, why, then, would you need to go out and raise taxes even more and spend even more when you have an economy that is in the process of recovering and people concerned about inflation? And the Democrats' solution to that is to spend more, put more money out there, and raise taxes even higher at a time when you have historic revenue coming in to the Federal Government. It is the first time ever—ever—in our Nation's history that we have had over \$4 trillion in revenue come in.

The other thing that was mentioned by my colleague from Illinois just a minute ago is that the issue of the tax gap, which was alluded to earlier this morning on the floor by, again, the Republican leader—the Democratic solution is to go after people, essentially shake them down, and get them to pay more in taxes.

I am not suggesting for a minute that there aren't people out there who aren't paying the taxes that they should under the law and that the law needs to be enforced. What I am suggesting is that in the effort to close that so-called tax gap, there are huge differences of opinion about what effect that would have, how much could be generated, and who is ultimately going to pay for that.

Well, now there is additional research out coming from the Joint Committee on Taxation that, in fact, the Democratic efforts to close the tax gap will hit lower income taxpayers the most.

To say that none of the tax increases or none of the tax policies that are

being proposed by the Democrats in their \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending spree proposal won't harm people who are making less than \$400,000 a year is laughable under any—any—plausible review of these tax policies and proposals, but this one in particular hits hardest at low-income taxpayers.

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, people making less than \$50,000 a year will pay anywhere from 40 to 57 percent off all the revenue that is generated off of that one proposal. People making less than \$100,000 a year will pay somewhere between 65 and 78 percent of all the taxes that are generated under that particular proposal in the Democratic plan. People making less than \$200,000 a year would pay up to 90 percent of the amount generated under that particular proposal in the Democrats' plan. So people making less than \$200,000 a year are going to be paying tens of billions of dollars more in taxes just on that one proposal which is out there, allowing the IRS essentially to snoop into people's personal transactions up to the \$600 level. I don't think there is any way you can get around the fact that under that scenario, people in the lower income categories are going to end up paying the lion's share of the cost of that.

So this isn't going to be without cost. This isn't going to be without consequence. This is not going to be without impact on lower income taxpayers in this country. They are going to get hit and they are going to get hit hard under this Democratic proposal.

So when we talk about it, we are talking about real impacts, real economic impacts on the American people's lives. And we are going to continue to do everything we can to fight against really bad tax policies being put in place to finance massive amounts of spending, expansion, and growth of government at a time when government revenues just hit a historic high; never seen before; biggest year-over-year increase in revenue since 1977. And Democrats want to raise taxes—taxes—on everybody, including those in the lower income categories.

BORDER CRISIS

Mr. President, the Biden border crisis continues unabated. In August, U.S. Customs and Border Protection encountered 208,887 people attempting to illegally cross our southern border, a 318-percent increase from August of 2020. Now, for context, that number is bigger than the population of Sioux Falls, SD, the largest city in my home State.

At this point, "crisis" is too mild of a description. Things at the border are out of control, and there is little to suggest that things will improve anytime soon as the Biden administration continues to permit an influx of migrant entries and has sought to install appointees who have lax views about enforcing our immigration laws.

In yet another sign of how bad things are, dozens of National Guard members from South Dakota recently deployed